

KNOWING WHOM TO TRUST Sunday School- June 19, 2011

Unifying Topic: GOD PROTECTS

Lesson Text

I. **Rahab's Faith** (Joshua 2:3-9)

II. **God's Provision** (Joshua 2:15-16, 22-24)

The Main Thought: And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us. (Joshua 2:24, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Most people want to know they are or can be protected from harm. On whom can we depend for protection? God used Rahab to protect the spies from harm when she hid them from the soldiers the king of Jericho sent to find them.

Lesson Aim: To teach students to appreciate how God used Rahab to help the Hebrew spies.

Life Aim: To emphasize how God uses the most unlikely people to fulfill His will and to teach us how to trust those whom God graciously places in our lives to help us.

2:3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

2:4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

2:5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I was not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

2:6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

2:7 And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

2:8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

2:9 And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

2:15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

2:16 And she said unto them, get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

2:22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not.

2:23 So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them:

2:24 And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

HISTORY:

At the end of Joshua 1, the mighty men of valour of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh tells Joshua that they would be with him; they would do all things commanded of them and go whithersoever Joshua sends them. There was immediate and enthusiastic agreement reconfirmed to Joshua as it had been with Moses.

2:1a And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly: Joshua uses wisdom. He secretly sends out two spies from the land of Shittim.

"Shittim" is literally from the "Valley of Acacias" (a valley in the land of the Moabites on the border of Palestine).

It is a place east of the Jordan; their last resting-place before they crossed the Jordan. Jericho is the strongly fortified frontier town of Canaan; also known as the city of fragrance; the city of the palm trees.

2:1b saying, Go, view the land, even Jericho: He sends two men to view the land especially Jericho. This is the same process Moses used. This time it was not twelve spies but two. As you know two of the twelve spies came back with a good report. I assume Joshua understood the agreement of two because of he and Caleb being in agreement. Two is the symbol for number of witness, testimony (1 with 1=2). The reason they had wandered in the wilderness for forty years was, no agreement and no trust in God.

¹Note the text says, (even) "*especially Jericho*" which shows us Joshua was particularly interested in this city. Why? Jericho lay just five miles on the other side of the Jordan and was one of the most formidable fortresses in the land. Conquering this city would not only give them a strong foothold into the land, but conquering Jericho would literally split the forces of the Canaanites by coming into Canaan in the middle hindering their communication and supply lines.

Why didn't he just go ahead, knowing God would somehow supply? He had not been given instruction on just how He would defeat the enemies they would face. As a wise military leader, Joshua was simply gathering information concerning the layout of the enemy's defenses, the condition of their moral, and other factors that would be important to any military campaign. Moreover he was not to presume on the Lord. He was to trust the Lord implicitly, but in that trust, he was also to use the resources God gave him: the training, the men, and the wisdom he had gained. By application, Joshua was living and acting on the precepts of Scripture as he was commanded in 1:7-8.

2:1c And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. God knew the hearts of those under the leadership of Moses, being stiff-necked people and He knows the hearts of those now under the leadership of Joshua, a new generation. As God leads these spies, He leads them to the right place. He leads them to Rahab's house. Some commentators say this was an inn and she was the innkeeper. However, it said house. All I know is that Rahab was a harlot and God directed them there. He knew her heart was open to Him and that she would be instrumental in the Israelite's victory over Jericho. When people establish trust in God and the man God placed in position for a particular purpose, they would certainly be under the care and protection of God. His protection and care is there to keep them safe. They were so safe that they lodged there.

2:2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. Even though they'd tried to avoid being noticed, by coming at night, the king of Jericho found out that Israelite spies had entered Rahab's house. "*Hey, those Israelite men have come into our land; they come to search it out!*" You know how word gets out! They were on high alert!

LESSON:

Joshua 2:3-9 Rahab's Faith

2:3 And the king of Jericho sent into Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country: We see the men were not only seen coming into the city, but they were actually seen entering Rahab's house, but the king of Jericho didn't waste any time going to Rahab's house to give her a message to bring the men to him. He did not even like the thought of the Israelites spying out their land because of what had occurred on the other side of Jordan.

2:4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: This could have cost Rahab her life, if the king found her out. ²In the culture of that day, there was a strong tradition of hospitality. If someone was a guest in your house, you had a strong duty to protect them and care for them. Even considering this, Rahab went much further than the respect of cultural traditions regarding hospitality. She put her own life on the line for these men by hiding them from the king. She said they came by, true enough; but lied about not knowing where they came from. If Jews came into the city, they all knew. ³Rahab is telling lies to save the spies. She did not know the law of God and, probably, had no idea that telling lies was a sin. She, probably, did not even realize harlotry was a sin. She was a pagan woman living in a pagan society. These people were not taught in the ways of God. The spies did not ask Rahab to lie for them, nor did they commend her for this action.

2:5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the

¹ <http://bible.org/seriespage/preparing-enter-land-joshua-21-24>

² http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7509&commInfo=31&topic=Joshua&ar=Jos_2_3

³ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/joshua/02.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

men went I was not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them: ⁴At dark, the gate closed to the city. The city of Jericho was surrounded by walls, and some of the buildings made up a portion of those walls. Rahab lived inside the city gates; in fact, the back wall of her house was actually a part of the city wall. Rahab continues by telling the king's men that, they left, but I don't know where they went; although she did know, she knew just where they were! Now she adds, go after them quickly; you can catch them. She was trying to get them away from her place.

2:6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof: Rahab's flax might have been recently pulled, and was now drying on the roof of her house. It's used for making linen. Its stems are about three feet long and left to sit in water, then piled in the sun or on a level roof to dry; and, after lying awhile, it is piled up in numerous little stacks. The houses in the east were made of flat-roofs. They had flat roofs to do their daily business, walk about, converse, and oftentimes even sleep. This is where Rahab concealed the men, on the roof by piling stacks of flax upon them. She had enough flax laid out to dry and arranged in such a way as to cover over the two spies.

2:7 And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate: The king's men did as Rahab told them, pursued after the spies, even going as far as the Jordan to the fords. "Fords" or passages are the places where people used to pass over Jordan. This is the way in which these spies could get over Jordan, but the king's men probably did not choose to go further, because it would be to no purpose, and they might expose themselves to the camp of Israel, which lay on the other side. After the king's messengers had left the town, they shut the gate to prevent the spies from escaping, in case Rahab was mistaken and they were still lurking in the town.

2:8-9 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you: Before they went to sleep, Rahab went upon the roof and began to converse with them. She began with a surprising outburst of faith which really shows how God had a plan in bringing Rahab and the spies together. Rahab had heard of the miracles the Lord wrought for Israel. She believed that His promises would certainly be fulfilled, and His threatenings would take effect; and that there was no way of escape but by submitting to Him, and joining with His people. Israel's reputation, or, more precisely, God's reputation had preceded them and we find out three things behind the walls.

- The Lord hath given you the land.
- Your terror is fallen upon us.
- All the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

⁵For 40 years the Canaanites had been in fear of the Israelites. This must have been a revelation to these men of the terror that had laid hold of the whole population of Canaan, leaders and people alike. They knew that they could not stand against Israel's God.

NOT A PART OF THE LESSON:

2:12-14

Rahab risked her life for their safety, because she believed in their God. She pleads for her entire family, all that they have, as well as herself. This is similar to Christianity. Each Christian's desire is that his family will be saved. She is asking for something that will identify her and save her family, when the siege occurs. The condition upon which their lives were spared became the eventual salvation for Rahab's family. The spies said, "Our lives for yours." This was conditional. They had agreed to Rahab's terms, if she remains silent about their plans.

Joshua 2:15-16, 22-24 God's Provision

2:15 Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt

⁴ <http://kukis.org/Joshua/Joshua02.htm>

⁵ http://www.backtothebible.org/index.php/component?option=com_devotion/qid,4/task,show/resource_no,306/Itemid,75/
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

upon the wall: This cord was a scarlet cord or rope (v18). It had to be strong enough to let down two men. The men were permitted to escape by being lowered from her window on to the ground outside the wall. There was a similar happening, when Paul was let down by a basket outside the wall. ⁶It is significant that it was a scarlet cord, or rope, that Rahab was to display in her window. This was symbolic of the blood of Christ, which, according to 1 John 1:7, cleanses us from all sin. The protection that came to Rahab's household reminds us also of the incident of the Passover in Egypt. God instructed His people to sprinkle blood on the doorposts of their houses. The scarlet cord in Rahab's window protected her household just as the blood on the doorposts protected the Israelites in Egypt. The New Testament makes special mention of Rahab with regard to this. James wrote: "*Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*" (2:25). That part of the house in which she particularly dwelt was built on or a part of the wall. Rahab had a faith that worked. She aided the spies in their escape from Jericho and hung a scarlet cord from her window. This was faith in action.

2:16 And she said unto them, get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way: The spies took the advice of Rahab by quickly fleeing to the mountain. Not only had Rahab helped them out of the city, but she tells them of a good hiding place in the mountains where they will be safe. Near Jericho the mountains were full of caves, and they would be safe hiding in one of them. Since it was in the opposite direction, the armies of the king of Jericho, would not naturally be looking for the spies on that side of the city of Jericho. The mountain was near the city in which they were to hide, for three days and then be able to go back to their camp when the pursuers were no longer looking for them.

NOT A PART OF THE LESSON: 2:17-21

The men warned her that, unless she did what they told her, they would be free from the oath she had made them. So the men have agreed to see that she and her family are spared, but they have to set some reasonable conditions. Those, whose lives Rahab had begged for, will have to be in her home to be safe. Their sign of salvation would be the scarlet thread (cord; rope) in the window. Doesn't this remind you of the night the death angel came to Egypt? She must not only put the red thread of rope on her house, but she must not tell of their mission. Rahab agreed according to their terms as to what they told her to do.

2:22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not: Rahab had directed the men to the mountain and probably supplied them with food for three days until they were no longer pursued. The king's men had to have searched every hedge, field, and village as they went. However, after not finding them, they had to return to the king with the news.

2:23 So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them: After waiting a period of time, concealing themselves in the mountain for three days, the two spies came down from the mountain and crossed the river Jordan back to their commander-in-chief, Joshua. They ⁷told him all things that befell them:

- what house they went into when they came to Jericho,
- what reception they were met with,
- the report of them to the king of Jericho,
- how messengers were sent by the king of Jericho to demand they be released to him,
- and by what means they were preserved and made their escape.
- and they told Joshua of their promise to Rahab, as well.

2:24 And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us: And they told Joshua of the fear that had come upon the inhabitants of the

⁶ http://www.backtothebible.org/index.php/component?option=com_devotion/qid,4/task,show/resource_no,307/Itemid,75/

⁷ <http://bible.cc/joshua/2-23.htm>

land and how that the Lord had delivered them into their hands. What the Israelites had done to Egypt at the hand of God and drying up the Red Sea, was so spectacular that these people of Jericho still remembered forty years later and were still afraid. Also what they did to the two kings of the Amorites on the other side of the Jordan. The report the spies brought was encouraging. How different was this report from what was brought by the spies on a former occasion! There were no negative reports this time. The two spies found they truly could take this land of promise. The best news of all is the fact that the land they are about to enter, is fearful of the God of the Israelites; the enemy will, probably, give up easily, since they know that Israel's God fights for Israel. God's provision was with them to take the Promised Land 40 years ago however, they didn't believe it; now they are really assured that He will be with them and they are the fearless one now instead of the fearful.

SUMMARY:

That which seems to be accidental, is often overruled by the Divine providence to serve great ends. It was by faith that Rahab received those with peace, against whom her king and country had feared and about to go to war. After the servants of the king had come by looking for them, Rahab sent them quickly out by giving them the story that she didn't know where they had come from nor where they had gone. However, Rahab took the spies into her house and hid them from the king's men. The spies had been hidden on top of her roof under some flax stocks which had been laid out to dry. Rahab later let them out by a window with a scarlet cord to the outside of the walls after the city gate had been closed and secured. They were to secure all of her family when they were to take the city. War can be going on all around us, but, we are protected and covered by the blood of Jesus. This is a clear parallel to the Passover in Egypt. Death came to everyone except those houses marked by the blood. Death came to every person of Jericho but the one marked by the crimson cord. That's what happened with Rahab, all her household saved. The spies said, "*Our lives for yours.*" They would be saved if she didn't reveal their plans.

It appears, this window was in the wall of the city. Rahab let them down by a scarlet cord to the ground outside the wall; gives them instructions to hide in the mountain; and now they are to remain hidden for three days. They were able to hide safely, until the searchers from the king stopped looking.

The report the spies brought was encouraging. "*All the people of the country faint because of Israel.*"

APPLICATION:

People, who are thinking about becoming a Christian, should not wait, until the trumpet blows in the sky. Trust Jesus Now!